

1 INTRODUCTION

Vision

The vision for Upper Wisconsin Avenue is that of a vibrant street with an interesting mix of outdoor cafés, shops, restaurants, housing and offices. People living and working on Wisconsin Avenue, as well as people from the surrounding neighborhoods, are able to walk to several nationally known retailers and locally owned specialty stores, which offer everything from the latest fashions to the tastiest cuisine. Empty nesters and young professionals will want to live on Wisconsin Avenue because they know what great neighborhoods abound the Avenue and they also know that by living in an apartment or condominium on the Avenue that they'll be within walking distance of two transit stations

for their commute to work or to head downtown on weekends to play.

Upper Wisconsin Avenue currently has many of the types of stores that make living near it a pleasure, but as more people move onto the Avenue and walk along the Avenue to do their commuting and shopping and living, new businesses will follow - businesses like a local hardware store and an ice cream shop as well as other unique stores that will help to create a more attractive and lively street environment. This will allow Upper Wisconsin Avenue to truly excel and will make a great street even better.

Background

Wisconsin Avenue is one of the primary corridors in the District of Columbia's Ward 3. Historically, it has been a major commercial and vehicular thoroughfare for Washington D.C. and nearby suburban residents and continues to serve that role today. Unlike Connecticut Avenue, which has a series of commercial nodes along a dense residential avenue, and Massachusetts Avenue, which is primarily residential, Wisconsin Avenue has been primarily commercial and institutional. The northern section of Wisconsin Avenue - also known as Upper Wisconsin Avenue - connects many strong and stable Ward 3 neighborhoods to local and regional destinations. Development patterns and building types range from older one-story retail stores to suburban style office

buildings and reflect the Avenue's history before and after the completion of the MetroRail stations.

In 2001, residents expressed concern about the random development that was occurring off the Avenue and the lack of neighborhood-serving retail, especially in Tenleytown. Residents requested that the DC Office of Planning (OP) undertake a planning study to preserve existing assets along Wisconsin Avenue, guide development opportunities, encourage a better mix of uses and create a better sense of place.

The District Government also recognized that Wisconsin Avenue warranted attention for several reasons. First, the Washington D.C. metropolitan region was experiencing growth in the residential and commercial markets. Second, property owners

Key Design Principles of Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)

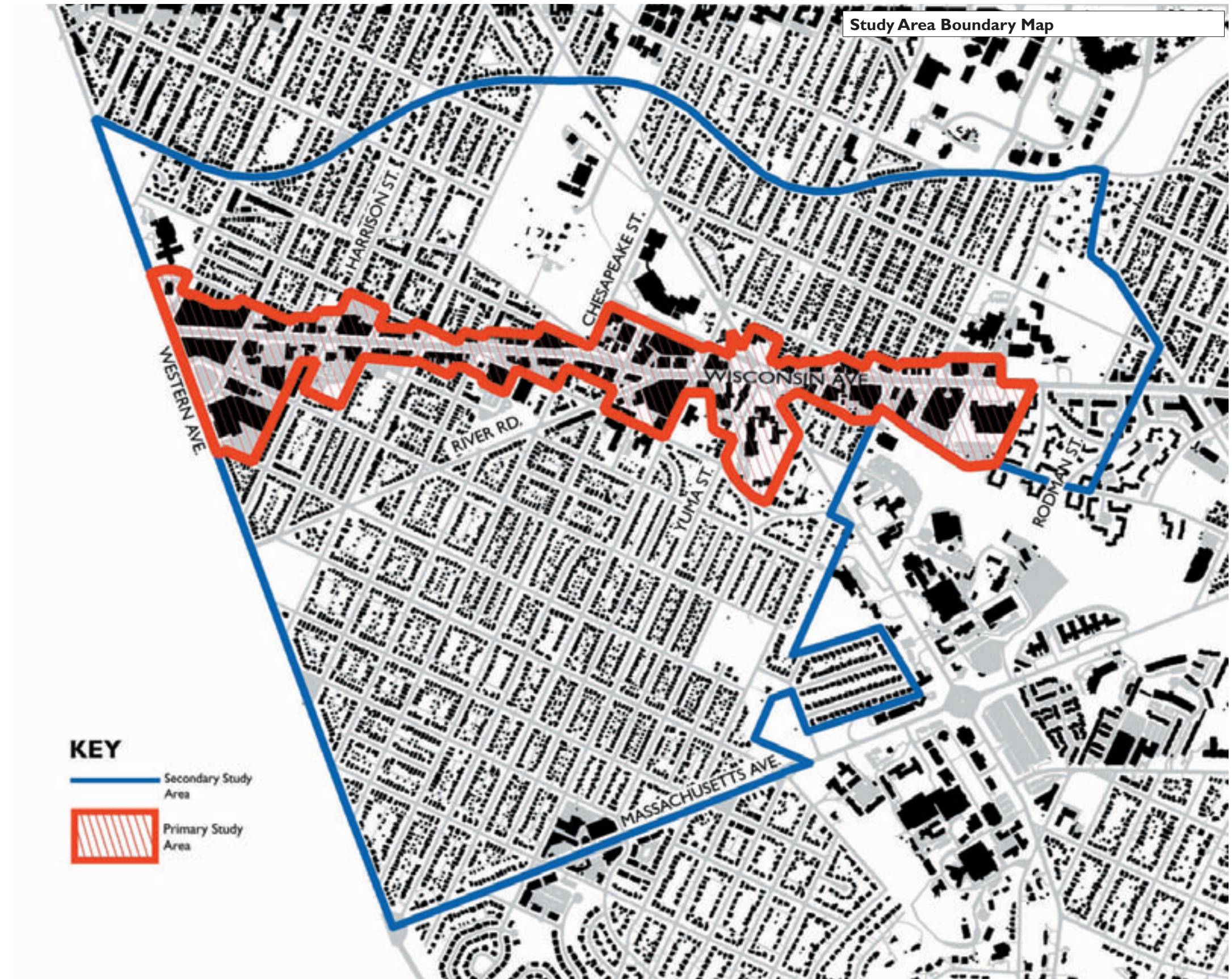
1. Orientation and Connectivity
2. Quality Public Realm and Amenities
3. Pedestrian-Friendly, Safe Environment
4. Attractive Architecture and Design
5. Mix of Uses
6. Creative Parking Management

had expressed a renewed interest in developing sites along Wisconsin Avenue. Finally, the Mayor's stated goal of increasing the District's population by 100,000 residents elevated the importance of more dense residential areas within walking distance of MetroRail stations. Areas such as Upper Wisconsin Avenue were seen as logical locations for modest residential growth.

Plan Objectives

In June 2002, the Office of Planning began work on the Upper Wisconsin Avenue Corridor Study (referred to hereafter as UWACS or the Study), which resulted with this report - the Upper Wisconsin Avenue Corridor Study - Strategic Framework Plan. To ensure that local and citywide concerns were balanced, the Plan put forth four objectives:

1. To guide redevelopment opportunities so they will be in harmony with existing development and surrounding residential neighborhoods, but will allow the corridor to meet its full potential utilizing Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Principles.
2. To preserve existing assets of the corridor and enhance them
3. To recommend strategies to encourage a better mix of uses, including neighborhood-serving retailers and housing.
4. To recommend strategies to create a better sense of place.





Wisconsin Avenue

Project Area

Two study areas define the plan: the Primary Study Area and the Secondary Study Area. The Primary Study Area consists of approximately a 2-mile stretch along Upper Wisconsin Avenue from just north of Rodman Street to Western Avenue. The Primary Study Area includes property immediately adjacent to Wisconsin Avenue, contiguous with commercial zoned property along Wisconsin Avenue, or adjacent and important to include due to existing redevelopment proposals (e.g., the Washington Clinic site). The Primary Study Area is predominantly commercial.

For analysis purposes, the Primary Study Area was divided into four sub-areas: Friendships Heights, Middle Wisconsin, Tenleytown and South of Tenleytown. The Friendship Heights sub-area is from Western Avenue to Harrison Street. The Middle Wisconsin sub-area is from Harrison Street to Chesapeake Street. The Tenleytown sub-area is from Chesapeake Street to Yuma Street. And the South of Tenleytown sub-area is from Yuma Street to Rodman Street.

The Secondary Study Area is defined by Western Avenue, Reno Road, Porter Street, (approximate) and Massachusetts Avenue and consists of the residential neighborhoods with many institutional uses. Neighborhoods that surround the corridor are primarily residential and include stable tree-lined and predominantly single-family communities such as Friendship Heights, Tenleytown, American University Park, Chevy Chase and North Cleveland Park.



Design and Drawing Production

Planning Process

The planning process, which began as a response to the Cluster 11 Strategic Neighborhood Action Plan (SNAP) conducted in 2001, has been highly interactive. As part of the SNAP process, the Office of Planning worked with citizens to identify top priority issues for each neighborhood cluster. One of the priorities identified for Cluster 11 was the need for a strategic development plan/small area plan for the Friendship Heights and Tenleytown commercial areas. In addition, citizens had indicated that they were concerned with development occurring in residential neighborhoods, such as the Albemarle Townhouses, and the need to focus future development on Wisconsin Avenue. An Advisory Steering Committee was convened in the summer of 2002 to assist the Office of Planning draft the scope of work and define the process for the development of the UWACS. The Steering Committee included representatives from each of the ANCs in the study area as well as representatives from neighborhood and community organizations, property and business owners and several citizens.

The Study included an analysis of existing conditions, informational meetings on transit-oriented development and retail development, a market analysis a charrette and several focus group meetings. The process was designed to be open and informative. The public participation in the design effort was centered on a four-day charrette, which was held in February of 2003. The open work session was well attended

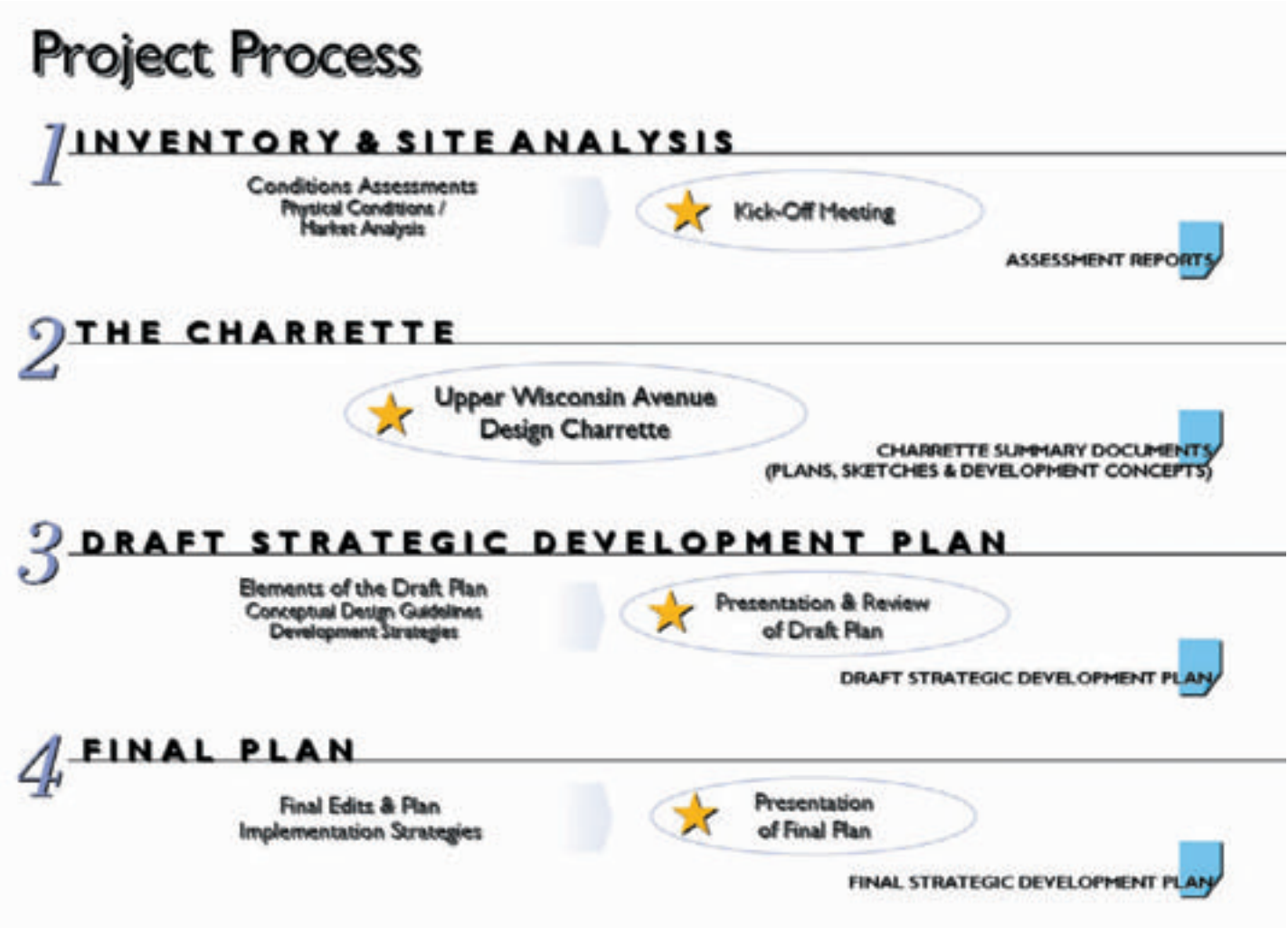


Charrette Presentation to Community



Walking Tour With Community Members

Process Diagram



Upper Wisconsin Avenue Corridor Study Advisory Steering Committee Membership
Office of Councilmember Kathy Patterson
Office of Councilmember Phil Mendelson
Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 3C
Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 3E
Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 3F
American University
At-Large Citizens
Chevy Chase Shopping District Association
Circle Management
Coalition to Stop Tenleytown Overdevelopment
Ft Gaines Citizens' Association
Allen Frames
Lisner Home
Lowe Enterprises Real Estate Group
Roadside Development
Tenleytown-Friendship Heights Citizen Association
Tenleytown Historical Society
Tenleytown Neighbors Association
Ward 3 Smart Growth Coalition
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

by the community and resulted in a preliminary draft of an illustrative plan and framework for the recommendations. Following the charrette, a focus group meeting was conducted in each of the four sub-areas to gather additional information from the community on their vision for the corridor. The results of the charrette, focus group meetings and District policies were combined to create the Draft Strategic Framework Plan.

In the fall of 2003, the draft Plan was completed and presented to the community at two public meetings. At the request of the Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (ANCs) and citizens, the public review and comment period was extended from 30 to 90 days. At the end of the 90-day public comment period, OP hosted a public hearing at which 39 people testified. OP received additional comments from individuals and resolutions from each of the three

ANCs in the study area as well as from some of the other Ward 3 ANC's and from several of the local community and neighborhood organizations. In total, 122 comments were received and the information was entered into a database. It provided OP with a general view of the community's main concerns and vision for the area.

The DC Office of Planning (OP) was committed to achieving the highest degree of consensus possible on the UWACS Strategic Framework Plan. So, in January 2004, OP reconvened the UWACS Advisory Steering Committee to assist in addressing some of the public comments and concerns that were being raised on the draft Plan and to advise OP in revising the Plan. The culmination of those efforts resulted in this document. A detailed description of the planning process undertaken can be found in Appendix A.

